



# Spark Gap

Vol. 35, Issue 3, March 2019 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for thirty-five years*

## SPECIAL 35<sup>th</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

### Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

Hard to believe it has been thirty-five years since a small group of Johnson county Amateur Radio operators got together in Franklin, invited a few friends from surrounding counties and formed the Mid-State ARC. That group of 2-Meter pioneers quickly grew to 29-members, became an ARRL chartered club and began a quest to serve the Johnson county community with emergency communications and to promote radio technology.

The following pages highlight the history of the club, the people, the officers and the radio hardware that has evolved to make MARC one of the outstanding Amateur Radio clubs in America.



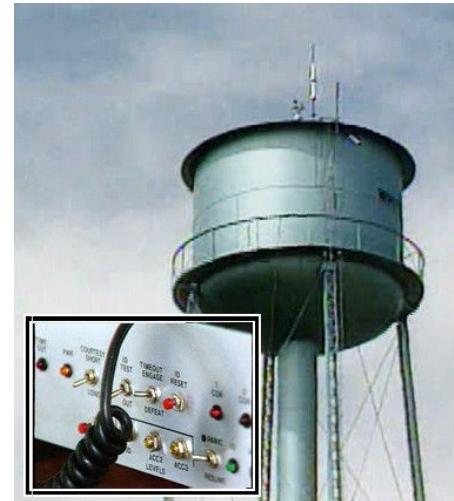
## MARC Repeater History-

For most Amateur Radio clubs the repeater and operating frequency is the core and heart of their club. The MARC repeater has literally had its Ups and Downs throughout the years.

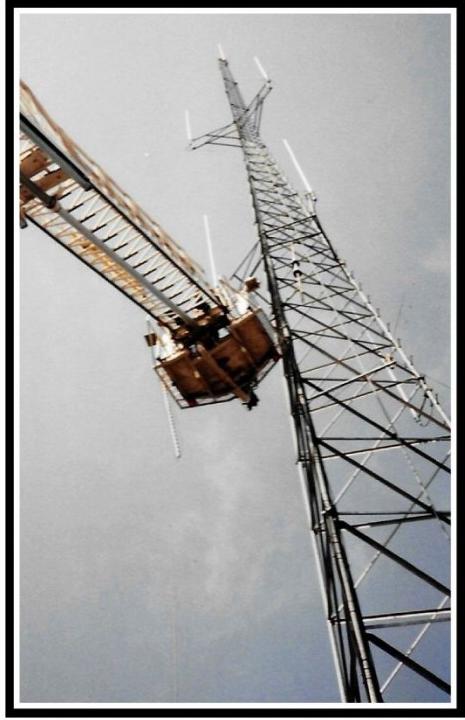
**In early 1984** our first repeater with home-brewed duplexer went on the air from the backyard storage barn at Tom Carroll's house (N9AZD) just south of Whiteland High School. The first antenna was a Ringo Ranger. Larry Oakes-WB9YAJ made the cans, a notch filter, out of 3-inch rigid transmission line. Larry says the repeater was a pair of Hi Pro boards from Maggiore Boards. After a brief stay in Whiteland records show the repeater moved northeast to the rural Greenwood home of club president Paul Thomas-KA9DTH. The original repeater frequency was 145.450 Mhz.

**In 1986** the repeater found a new home on top of the Whiteland water tower. A 4'x8' shed was framed by Mark Quebe-N9EKG at his Southport home and then hauled to Whiteland where club members nailed on the sides, roof, flooring and built a door. Larry-N9DLN and Jay-AA9YP climbed up the water tower to weld on a post, mount the Ringo Ranger antenna and affix the hardline. When powered up the repeater frequency officially changed to ***146.835 Mhz***. For the first time in the club's brief history our repeater became a high profile repeater heard from Kokomo to Columbus and from Greencastle to Greensburg.

**In 1988** the antenna was mounted on a refurbished 200-foot tower acquired by Joe Vergara-KA9ZPA. As a crane operator Joe had removed the damaged tower from a downtown Indianapolis site. MARC members striped, painted and reassembled the tower before burying the bottom section in a poured concrete footing at the Whiteland Street Department property. The antenna topped out at 198-feet, so tower lights were not required. The 4'x8' repeater shack was moved from the base of the old water tower and placed next to the newly erected tower. Again, our repeater took on an even higher profile in Johnson county. The Whiteland water tower was soon dismantled and removed.



**In 1992** the repeater equipment was moved southwest to Trafalgar and mounted on the WTTV transmitter tower at 450-foot. Thanks to WTTV engineer Charlie Sears-N9MEW (sk), that location elevated the MARC repeater to even greater heights. By default the 146.835 machine became the “across Indiana” repeater heard from Terre Haute to Richmond. Eighteen wheeled truck drivers loved it. Johnson county hams reportedly didn’t like all the extra radio traffic.



**In November 1992,** wind load problems on the WTTV tower forced the repeater antenna to be stripped off the broadcast tower. We relocated the antenna at 70-foot on short tower behind the Johnson county jail. A new 8'x10' repeater shack was built at the base of the tower to hold the repeater, duplexers and amateur TV receiver.

**In August 1996** the repeater got a \$3500 upgrade with the purchase of an Eclipse repeater from RF Technologies. Using donated funds the model T150 transmitter was paired with the R150 receiver. According to repeater trustee Dave Julian-WB9YIG, the 150 watt transmitter was dialed back to 100 watts output. Keith Cohoon-K9PDI donated a 386 PC to be used as the controller. This was the first major repeater upgrade in ten years. It featured voice ID's, recorded announcements and auto-patch. Club dues were increased to pay for the land-line and telephone bill.

**November 2012** marked another major upgrade to the MARC repeater. A Phelps-Dodge two meter base antenna was installed at 140-feet on the top of the new radio tower behind White River Township Engine house #52 on Olive Branch Road. Our rack of repeater equipment was installed in the basement radio equipment room at the Engine House. Club President Bob Jones-KB9NJM had the honor of placing the new Kenwood TKR751 repeater into the rack.





Jack Parker-W8ISH and Steve Carmean-K9DY programmed the repeater with ID and radio frequencies using a laptop computer. We have now moved into the digital programming age. Steve Ellis-AF9SE, Ron Koons-W9TEJ and Steve Brown-N9LC completed the coax and wiring connections. Repeater trustee Jay Chrisman-AA9YP handled the fine tuning.

**In August 2013** we added our first Link to the repeater system. A Diamond 2-Meter band antenna was bolted to a standoff bracket near the top of the commercial broadcast tower just east of Edinburgh, Indiana. The tower is owned by Bob Hawkins-WA8ZVY. Club tower climber Mike Rose-KC9WLR extended hard-line and coax to the receive antenna at 170-foot on the tower.

A UHF beam at 70 feet was utilized to relay the signal twenty miles up to the White River Township repeater site. Hawkins-WA8VZY gave the club rack space for the dual band Link radio in his radio equipment room. A dual band Diamond antenna near the top of the tower behind Fire Station #52 is used to receive the UHF Link signal. The technical committee ground crew was Steve Ellis-AF9SE, Steve Carmean-K9DY, Steve Brown-N9LC, Jack Parker- W8ISH and Bob Jones-KC9NJM.



**In 2018** a Yaesu DR-1 Fusion repeater was installed in the Franklin repeater shack behind the jail and serves as a Link receive site. The Edinburgh Link site was taken off line at the same time. Repeater trustee Chris Frederick-KQ9Y continues to upgrade the system.



## IN THE BEGINNING:

For the Mid-State ARC time marches on. *February 19, 2019* marked thirty-five years since the founding of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. In 1984 just over a dozen hams from Johnson and surrounding counties chose the name and accepted the ARRL Charter from then Indiana Section Manager Mike Head- WB9ZQE. The organizational meeting was held at Franklin Fire Station #1. The young group of hams then moved across the street and began holding their Saturday morning breakfast meetings in the back room of the House of Franklin at 8am the third Saturday of each month. That tradition of Saturday morning meetings continues to this day. The House of Franklin was a popular eatery located at the intersection of US 31 and Northwood Drive. A Rally's and Taco Bell now occupy that space on the point.

Those Founding Members are Paul Thomas-KA9DTH, Larry Kemp-N9DLN, Joan Kemp-N9DON, Darrell Sego-KM9S, Bob Doles-WB9AYB, Tom Carroll-N9AZD, Bill Fisher-KG9K, Homer Keesling-WB9OZZ, David Wendt-KA9OOH, Brad Stone-NB9M and Ira Sanders-WA9RDF. Several more hams joined the club in the beginning: Ed Woods-WD9DVA, Dave Distler-KN9E, Toby Monk-WB9TSW, Til Kinser-KI9R, Larry Oakes-WB9AYB, Jay Chrisman-KA9MUU, Tom Siefert-WB9RCI, Tom Cashion-KD9EQ and Walt Howard-N9FWF.

In 1986, club members chose to change the meeting start time to 10am. According to then club president Jack Parker (NT9J), the later start time change didn't last. Within two months club members voted to return to the 8am start time. They found the later time interfered with other Saturday morning family obligations.

One year later in 1987, MARC moved their meeting location to the basement training room in the new Johnson County Administration Building. Civil Defense director Sam Williams offered the club their own radio room next to Sheriff's dispatch across from his Emergency Management office. Thus began twenty-five years of holding meetings and running ARES/RACES communications from the basement of the Johnson county Sheriff's office. Our radios consisted of one donated Kenwood VHF radio, a Kenwood TS-450 HF rig and a MFJ tuner purchased by Sam Williams. The county also bought our first commercially built duplexer for the repeater.

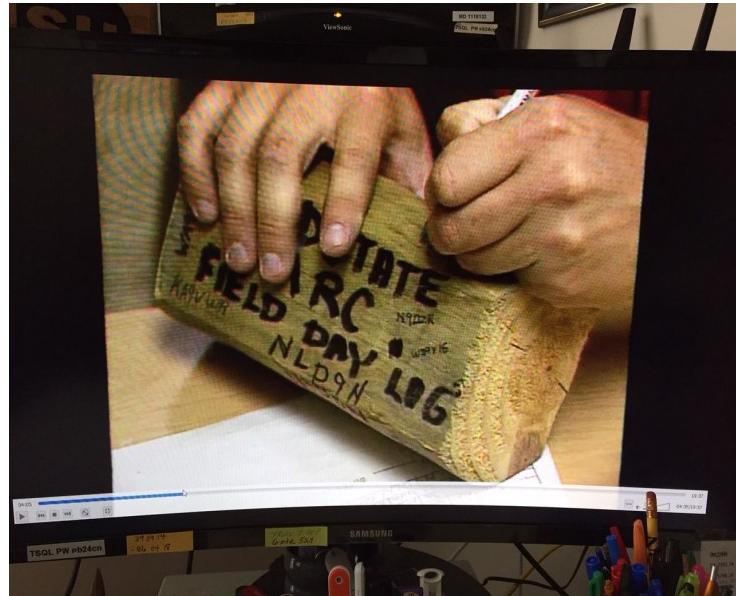
In 2009 a FEMA grant from the Indiana Home Land Security Agency (IDHS) purchased three base radios, two HF radios, two TNC's, antennas and assorted equipment to establish a first class emergency communications center in our radio room. In 2016 our Saturday morning meetings were relocated to the new EMA/911 Dispatch center behind the Johnson county jail. After a couple of frustrating years of dealing with increased security the club meetings were moved to our current home at the Johnson county REMC Headquarters on International Drive.



At the same time in July 2016 our radio equipment was removed from the jail basement and a new Radio Room was established in the former armory at the Johnson county Prosecutors office on Caisson Drive.

Those helping with the one day move were Jacki Frederick-KI6QOG, Ken-Barr-KD9ALA, Marlys Barr-KD9BHM, Dave Daily-KB9LOT, Chris Frederick-KQ9Y, John Stevenson-KV9FPO, Kevin Nuetzman-K9NTZ, Rusty Kirts-N9LLP, Steve Carmean-K9DY, Ron Schuetz-K9THR, Steve Ellis-AF9SE, Mike Turner-K9OMT, Bob La Grange-N9SIU, and Jack Parker-W8ISH.

Excellent leadership is the corner stone of every good Amateur Radio Club. For over three decades the Mid-State Amateur Radio club has been fortunate to have active creative people at the helm.



**The following pages list the club Presidents over the past 35-years.**

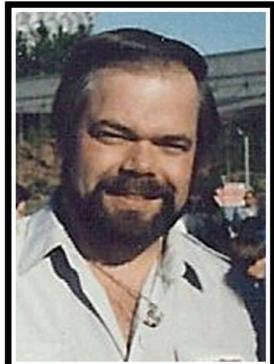
# MARC PRESIDENTS



Dave Wendt  
KA9OOH 1984



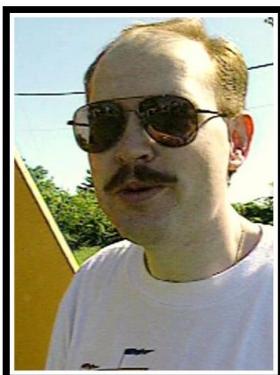
Paul Thomas  
KA9DTH 1985



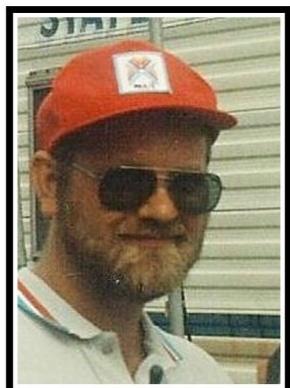
Jack Parker W8ISH  
1986 2008-2009



Joan Kemp  
N9DON 1987-1989



Eric Sluder  
KB9BGS 1990



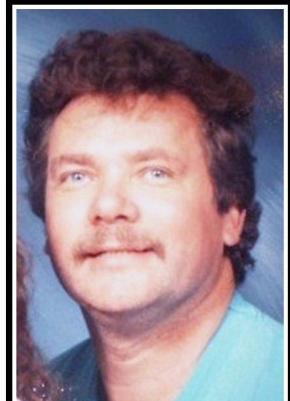
Dave Julian  
WB9YIG 1991



Joe Vergara  
KA9ZPA 1992



Bob Cammack  
N9IMP 1993



Roy Barnes  
N9PFZ 1994

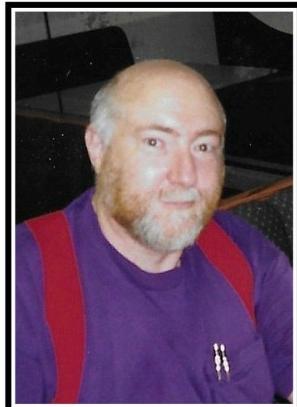
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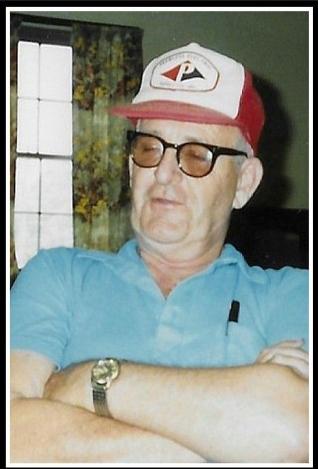
Terry Grubb  
N9YLJ 1996



Dennis Parton  
KB9HPQ 1997



Rick Reneau  
KB9NDF 1998



Al Soltis  
WA9ZET 1999-2000



JR Osborne  
KB9HSE 2001



Jay Chrisman  
AA9YP 2002



Jerry Schantz  
W9JJS 2003-2004

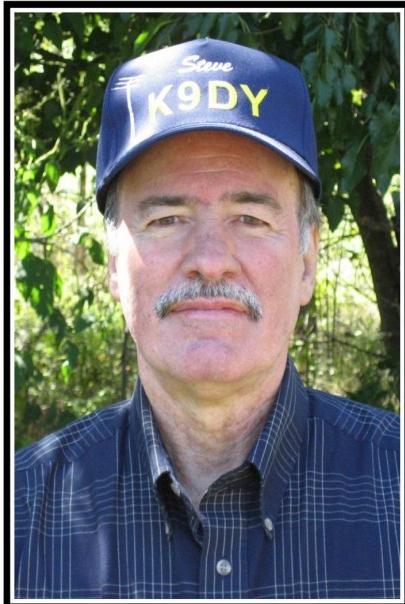


Ernest Clark  
KB9SKI 2005

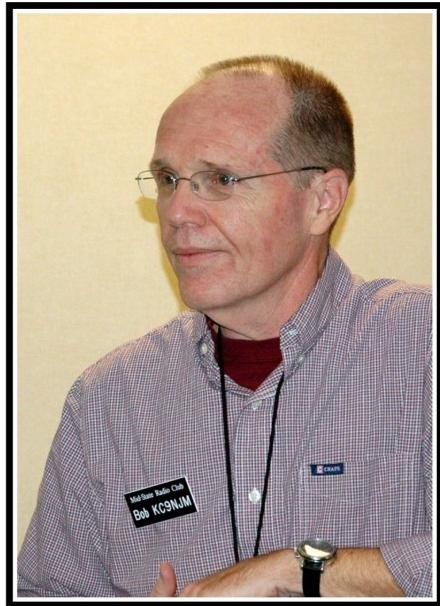


Scott Coombs  
KC9EKR 2006

## MARC PRESIDENTS



Steve Carmean  
K9DY 2010 & 2011



Bob Jones  
KC9NJM 2012 & 2013

**35**  
**YEARS**  
**1984 - 2019**



Jacki Frederick  
KI6QOG 2014 - 2019



## MID-SATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month at the Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.

See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

### WA9RDF Repeater:

146.835/  
146.235 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

### Club Officers:

President: Jacki Frederick – KI6QOG  
Vice President: Bill Jackson – KM6CRL  
Secretary: Rhonda Curtis – WS9H  
Treasurer: Ron Schuetz – K9THR  
Repeater Trustee - Chris Frederick – KQ9Y

### WA9RDF Repeater:

443.525/  
448.525 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

**Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and ALL RADIO AMATEURS**  
**146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)**

The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 836  
Franklin, Indiana  
46131

Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU

*Please send your articles to my email: [n9siu@yahoo.com](mailto:n9siu@yahoo.com) no later than the 3rd of the month*



*Special thanks to Johnson County REMC for the use of their community room for meetings and testing.*